THE Country-Parson's ADMONITION TO HIS Parishioners.

Malach. II. 7.

The Priest's Lips should keep Knowledge, and they should seek the Law at his Mouth; for he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts.

Hebr. XIII. 17.

Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit your selves; for they watch for your Souls.

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THE COUNTRY-PARSON'S ADMONITION TO HIS Parishioners.

YOU cannot but observe the restless importunity of the *Romish Clergy*, to gain Proselytes to their Church. And 'tis probable, that you your selves e're long, may happen to hear from them. For they have different forms of Address, very plausible and insinuating, fitted to the Capacities of all sorts of Persons. And therefore that you may not be

ſurprized with theſe Charmers, nor impoſed on by their methods of Deceit; I do think it my Duty thus to caution you againſt them, by deſiring you to obſerve theſe *two* Directions.

1. *A Holy Life.*

2. *A modeſt dependance upon your Spiritual Guide.*

As to the *firſt* of theſe, let me admoniſh you in the words of St. *James*, *Shew me thy Faith by thy Works.*

For it ſignifies nothing what Mens *Profeſſion* is, if their *Practice* is not anſwerable. And he who is in earneſt to ſave his Soul, will doubtleſs be as much afraid of *Debauched Courſes, as of erroneous Opinions*: Since thoſe do as much, nay more than theſe, occaſion his Damnation.

I do therefore beg of you,

That

That as you do profeſs your ſelves Members of the *Church of England*, ſo you would take great Care, that your Lives and *Converſation* may be anſwerable to its *Doctrine*.

The ſum of which Doctrine, as it relates to Practice, you do find in the *Church-Catechiſm*, in anſwer to thoſe *two* Queſtions. *What is thy Duty towards God?* and *What is thy Duty towards thy Neighbour?* Which I would adviſe you very often to read, and ſeriouſly to conſider. And when by the Aſſiſtance of God's Bleſſed Spirit, you have tranſcribed thoſe *Anſwers* into your Lives; Let me then aſſure you, That the *Ten Commandments* thus practiſed, are the beſt Expoſition of your *Creed*. *If any Man will do*

his Will, he ſhall know of the Doctrine, whether it be of God, John 7. 17. *For he that hath, to him ſhall be given: and he that hath not, from him ſhall be taken, even that which he hath,* Mark 4. 25. *i. e.* He who maketh a right uſe of that Grace and Knowledg which God hath given him: He who values and improves it, and is truly thankful for it, *To him ſhall be given more. And he that hath not; i. e.* He who hath not made a right uſe and improvement of his Grace or Knowledge; from him ſhall be taken, even that which he hath.

But becauſe you muſt not expect, that God ſhould now teach and inſtruct you in an extraordinary and miraculous manner, as he did the Apoſtles, but

but *mediately*, and in the use of Means: You are therefore to consider what those Means are, which God hath appointed for your Direction and Instruction. The chief of which (to omit others) is,

A modest Dependance upon the Ministerial Function.

I shall not now insist upon the publick Offices of the Church, nor your Obligation to attend them; as *Prayers*, *Sacraments*, *Preaching*, &c. But shall only direct you how to behave your selves, when any one designs to seduce you from the Communion of the *Church* of *England*.

And the Expedients I would propose, are these:

1. Let it be your earnest and daily *Prayer* unto God, to

give you his Grace, *to hold fast the Profession of your Faith, without Wavering*; that you may continue in the same unto your Lives End.

2. When you read the *Holy Scriptures*, and do find some Place which is too difficult for you; do not then pretend to *Interpret* it your selves. But beg the Direction of your *Spiritual Guide*; and desire him to shew you how it is to be understood.

3. As far as possible avoid all Disputes about Religion. *Be not carried about with every Wind of Doctrine*, Ephes. 4. 14. *i. e.* Do not hearken to the Whispers of every bold Pretender.

Which to Persons of your Capacity is very seasonable Advice. For, *To convince Gainsayers*,

ſayers, and to anſwer *Objections*, is a matter of Skill and Exerciſe; And therefore *You* (being a working People, who ſweat for your daily Bread) may with great modeſty acknowledge to your *Catholick Miſſionary*, that you have neither Leiſure nor Ability for ſuch Diſputes. And conſequently you may deſire him, ſince he is diſpoſed to diſcourſe of Religion, that he would rather help your Devotion, than diſturb your Belief.

You may aſſure him, That you ſhall not think your Faith the leſs firm and orthodox, becauſe you cannot return an *Extemporary* anſwer to the premeditated Objections of a learned Adverſary.

'Tis poſſible that ſuch a ſubtle

tle Diſputant, as he is, might pretend to prove to you; *That Graſs is not green.* And he might urge ſuch Arguments as would really baffle you; and to which you could not return any tolerable Anſwer. But yet for all his Sophiſtry, though he might ſilence, he would not ſatisfy. For you would ſtill believe your Senſes, and could not think it of any other Colour.

If this will not make him to deſiſt; But that he will ſtill be urging the great Priviledges of the Romiſh Church: *The Security of her Faith*; *The excellency of her devotion*; *The great Learning and Piety of her Clergy*, &c. To this you may reply

4. That you underſtand very little of the Priviledges of the Church of *Rome*. That

to

to know the State of any Foreign Church, requires more Skill and Reading than can be expected from Persons of your mean Condition. That you are Members of the Church of *England*, which is a true Catholick and Apostolick Church. That into this Church you were admitted by Baptism; and with this Church you have held Communion in all her Offices. And consequently to separate from this Church, without some urging cause, is downright *Schism*.

For *Schism*, in the proper notion of it, is, *A causless separation from that part of the visible Church, of which you are Members*.

And therefore he who hath a mind to make you his *Proselytes*, and will talk pertinently, and to the Point; before he can pretend

tend to invite you to the Church of *Rome*, he must first convince you, That it is your Duty to *separate* from the Church of *England*. In order to which, he must plainly prove, That the Church of *England* is no sound Member of the Church Catholick; and consequently, That Salvation cannot ordinarily be had in the Church of *England*: at least not with such safety, certainty, and advantage, as it may in the Church of *Rome*.

To prove this he must convince you, That the Doctrine of the Church of *England* is either *defective* or *false*. If he pretends that it is *defective*; he must then shew, that there are some Truths necessarily to be believed, as Articles of Faith, which the Church of *England* doth

doth not receive as ſuch: And alſo that there are ſome neceſſary Duties, or Parts of Worſhip, which the Church of *England* either wholly omits; or elſe doth not require under any ſuch Neceſſity. And let him here inſtance to you; what thoſe Articles and Parts of Worſhip are, wherein our Church is thus *defective*.

But if he affirms, *Secondly*, That the Doctrine of the Church of *England* is *Falſe*, he muſt then prove, That the Church of *England* doth require ſome *unlawful* Condition of her Communion; and that either in *Faith* or *Worſhip*. Plainly thus: He muſt make it appear, that her Faith is *erroneous*, and contrary to the written Word of God; *The Faith once delivered to the Saints*:

Or

Or elſe that her Worſhip is *unlawful*, Superſtitious, or Idolatrous. And let him here likewiſe give you an inſtance, and diſtinctly ſhew you, what particular Article of our Faith is thus *erroneous*: and what particular part of our Worſhip he thinks *unlawful*. And when he hath made his Exceptions, you may then tell him

5. That your Memory is but ſhort; and if he pleaſe therefore to give you in *Writing* what he hath now ſaid, together with *one* or *two* of his beſt Arguments upon thoſe Points; you may then conſider them at your Leiſure.

If he refuſeth to give you ſuch a Paper, ſuſpect him for a Cheat, and that he comes with a deſign to impoſe upon you. For

Truth

Truth doth not Fear the Light, but ſubmits its Tenents to the ſtricteſt Examination.

But if he grants your Deſire; then bring that Paper to *Me*, and give me the opportunity to tell you my Thoughts of it. And I do here beg and entreat you, nay (as one who muſt anſwer for your *Souls*, if they Periſh through my Neglect) I require and charge all you in this Pariſh committed to my Care; that you would be ſo Faithful both to your ſelves and me, as not to be too confident of your own Skill: nor to think any Argument unanſwerable, becauſe you your ſelves are not able to anſwer it.

In the affairs of this World, you do judge it Prudent to conſult other Men in their ſeveral

Profeſſions

Profeſſions, *Phyſicians*, *Lawyers*, &c.

Should ſome crafty Companion pretend to your *Eſtates*, you would not at the entring of his Action, grant him Poſſeſſion; but would conſult the Learned in the *Law*, how to defend your Title.

Pray therefore do not part with your Religion for a Trick. But be as careful of your Souls as you are of your Eſtates.

Let us hold faſt the Profeſſion of our Faith, without wavering; for he is Faithful that Promiſed. Heb. 10. 23.

FINIS.